



Seattle Police Department

Policies and Procedures

Section

1.010

Title:

I - Administration

Chapter:

010 – Bias Based Profiling

PURPOSE

This policy is intended to reaffirm the commitment of the Seattle Police Department to unbiased policing, to clarify the circumstances in which officers can consider race or ethnicity when making law enforcement decisions, and to reinforce procedures that serve to assure the public that we are providing service and enforcing laws in an equitable way. In order to be effective we must be trusted and deal with both the reality of the difficult and complex job of policing and the perception of police work.

POLICY

Investigative detentions, traffic stops, arrests, searches, and property seizures by officers will be based on a standard of reasonable suspicion or probable cause. Officers must be able to articulate specific facts and circumstances that support reasonable suspicion or probable cause for investigative detentions, traffic stops, arrests, nonconsensual searches, and property seizures.

Except as provided below, officers shall not:

- Consider race or ethnicity in establishing either reasonable suspicion or probable cause.
- Consider race or ethnicity in deciding to initiate even those nonconsensual encounters that do not amount to legal detentions or to request consent to search.

Officers may take into account the reported race or ethnicity of a specific suspect or suspects based on trustworthy, locally relevant information that links a person or persons of a specific race or ethnicity to a particular unlawful incident. Race or ethnicity can never be used as the sole basis for probable cause or reasonable suspicion.

Except as provided above, race or ethnicity shall not be motivating factors in making law enforcement decisions.

In an effort to prevent inappropriate perceptions of biased law enforcement, each officer shall do the following when conducting pedestrian and vehicle stops:

- Be courteous and professional.
- Introduce him- or herself to the citizen (providing name and agency affiliation), and state the reason for the stop as soon as practical, unless providing this information will compromise officer or public safety. In vehicle stops, the officer shall provide this information before asking the driver for his or her license and registration.
- Ensure that the detention is no longer than necessary to take appropriate action for the known or suspected offense, and that the citizen understands the purpose of reasonable delays.
- Answer any questions the citizen may have, including explaining options for traffic citation disposition, if relevant.
- Provide his or her name and badge number when requested, in writing or on a business card.
- Once the reasonable suspicion for the stop is dispelled or the stop was made in error, the officer will explain why the error was made, and apologize to the citizen if appropriate.

Supervisors shall ensure that all personnel in their command are familiar with the content of this policy and are operating in compliance with it.

ADMINISTRATION

At least annually, the Director of the Office of Professional Accountability shall prepare a report for the Chief of Police describing and analyzing the status of the Department's effort to prevent bias based profiling.

The Department's ongoing training curriculum shall include regular bias based profiling updates.